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REMARKS

The claims have been amended rather extensively in light of the Examiner's at and technical objections. It is believed that all 35 USC 112 issues have been addressed, but if the Examiner does not agree, she is most respectfully requested that she call the undersigned, as it is believed that any remaining issues can be dealt with in this manner.

The indicated allowability of dependent claims 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, 24 and 25 subject to their being rewritten in independent form is noted with appreciation. Due to the retention of the claims upon which they depend, these claims have not been rewritten at this time.

Turning now to the art rejections, claim 1 has been amended to further emphasize the distinctions between this claim and the applied Kan et al reference. As noted in the description of the problems with the prior art devices beginning with the last full paragraph on page 1 of the specification and carrying on through the first full paragraph of page 2, the prior art devices utilize two separate force sensors each operated by one of the assistants hands. This presents the problems as noted therein and these problems are present in the Kan et al device which utilizes two separate and independent sensors.

Claim 1 has been amended to stress further this distinction and, although the Examiner's position is understood, it is believed that she should reconsider her rejections in light of the amendments made.

Also it is believed that the rejected dependent claims recite features clearly lacking in the reference.

Another feature that is believed to patentably distinguish over Kan et al is the provision of the separate reverse control switch recited in claims 6 and independent claim 17 and those rejected claims depending on the latter. This avoids the problems noted in the second full paragraph of page 2 of the specification and also present in Kan et al which operates as described therein. That is Kan et al also senses reverse forces on the manual handles and applies automatically reverse assist. Therefore the Examiner is most respectfully requested to reconsider her rejection of claims 6, 17 and 21-23.

The Examiner is also respectfully requested to reconsider her rejection of claims 18-20 and 26 on the Kan et al reference. These claims deal with the zero point detection. Although the Examiner has referred applicant to a portion of the Kan et al specification that she believes supports her position, it is submitted that the reference utilizes pressure sensors and does not describe that they provide any zero point signal. Also it is believed that the description that begins at line 47 of column 8 deals with the operation provided by the patient operation of the hand wheels 6 and 7 not that of the assistant.

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In view of the foregoing it is most respectfully submitted that this case is in condition for favorable action and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted:



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